

NIGHTCRAWLER[®]



MARVEL

CLAREMONT
BENNETT
NAUCK
ROSENBERG

007

PREVIOUSLY IN...

NIGHTCRAWLER

RECENTLY RETURNING FROM THE AFTERLIFE, NIGHTCRAWLER HAS BEEN SEARCHING FOR HIS PLACE IN A WORLD FAR DIFFERENT FROM THE ONE HE LEFT BEHIND. BUT SINCE HIS RESURRECTION, NIGHTCRAWLER HAS, IN QUICK SUCCESSION, LOST HIS OPPORTUNITY FOR ETERNAL LIFE AND HIS FIRST LOVE. SHAKEN BY THESE TRAGEDIES, KURT NOWS FINDS HIMSELF REELING FROM ANOTHER: THE DEATH OF WOLVERINE.

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THE JEAN GREY SCHOOL IS VERY QUIET TONIGHT.



THE CLASSROOMS ARE EMPTY.

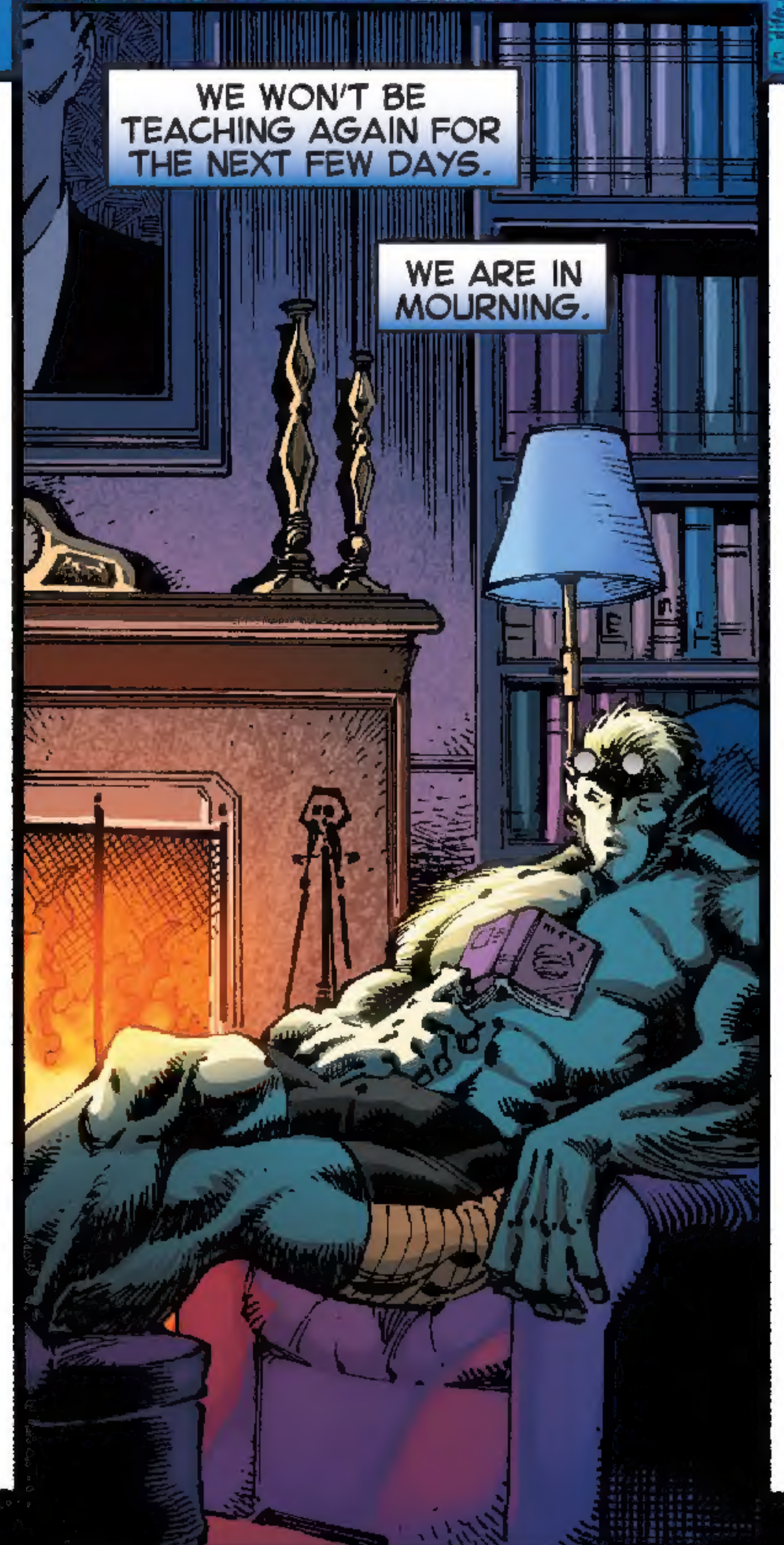


THE HALLS, SILENT BUT FOR THE SOUNDS OF NATURE.



WE WON'T BE TEACHING AGAIN FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

WE ARE IN MOURNING.



YOU SEE, WE DIDN'T START AS TEACHERS.



WE ARE **SUPER HEROES**, WE ARE THE **X-MEN**.

OUR STOCK IN TRADE IS SAVING THE WORLD, AND OCCASIONALLY ALL CREATION.

UNFORTUNATELY, THAT JOB COMES WITH A **PRICE--**

--THAT TOO MANY OF US OVER THE YEARS HAVE HAD TO PAY.

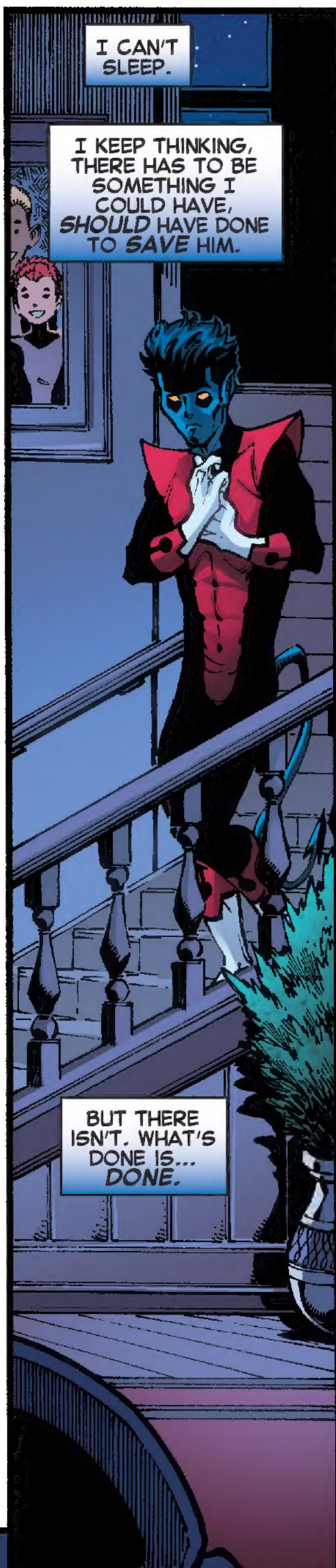




I AM KURT WAGNER.



AND MY BEST FRIEND IS DEAD.



I CAN'T SLEEP.

I KEEP THINKING, THERE HAS TO BE SOMETHING I COULD HAVE, SHOULD HAVE DONE TO SAVE HIM.

BUT THERE ISN'T. WHAT'S DONE IS... DONE.



NORMALLY, WHEREVER I WALK, MY BAMFS CLUSTER ALL AROUND ME.

TONIGHT, THEY LEAVE ME ALONE.

FOR THAT, I AM IN THEIR DEBT.



'S FUNNY.

I FELT MUCH THE SAME WHEN JEAN DIED.

SHE WAS PHOENIX, THE QUINTESSENCE OF LIFE ITSELF.

AND THEN SHE WAS GONE.

ALIVE SOLELY IN OUR MEMORIES.

MY HEART BROKE THEN.

THIS TIME IS WORSE.

NEPAL.

IN OUR GRIEF,
WE ALWAYS
SEEM TO BUILD.

WE BUILD
PYRES.



INDONESIA.

WE BUILD
GRAVES.

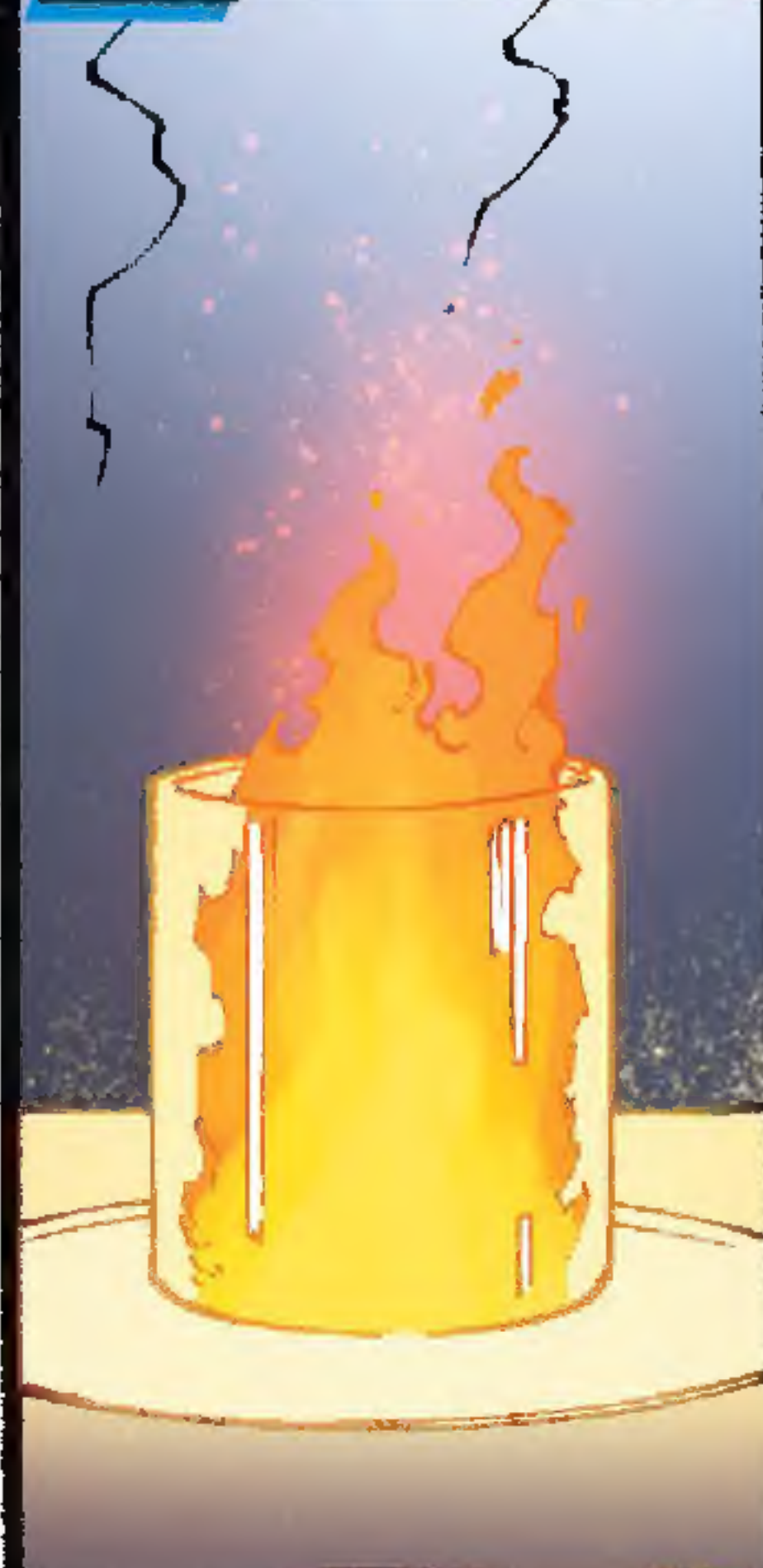


CHINA.

WE BUILD
TOMBS.



**THE HOLOCAUST
MUSEUM,
WASHINGTON
D.C.**



WE BUILD
MONUMENTS.



EGYPT.

WE BUILD
MAUSOLEUMS.

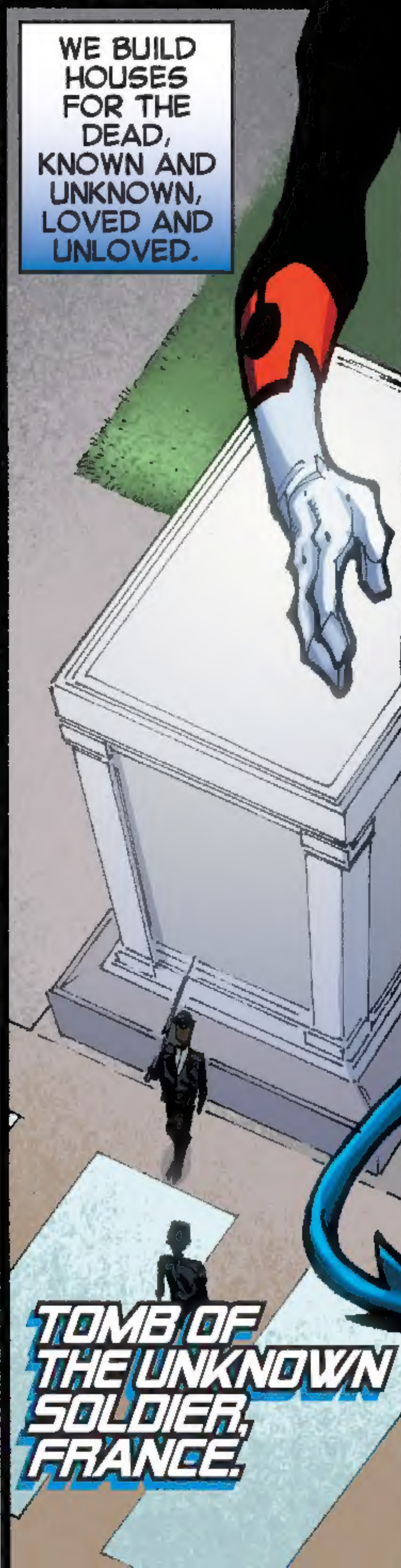


INDIA.

WE BUILD
PALACES.

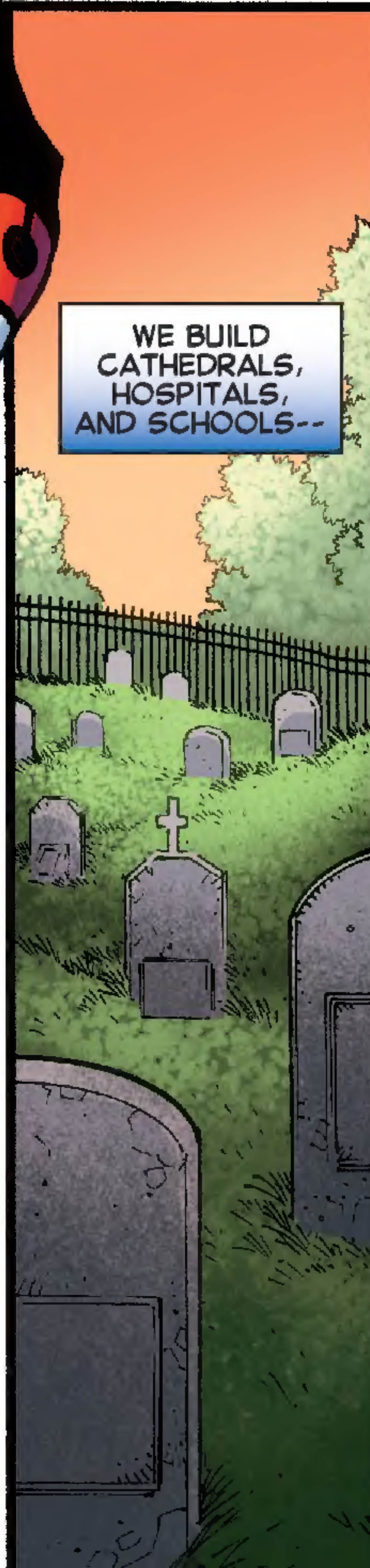


WE BUILD
HOUSES
FOR THE
DEAD,
KNOWN AND
UNKNOWN,
LOVED AND
UNLOVED.



**TOMB OF
THE UNKNOWN
SOLDIER,
FRANCE.**

WE BUILD
CATHEDRALS,
HOSPITALS,
AND SCHOOLS--



--LIKE THE VERY
SCHOOL I AM
STANDING IN NOW.



THE DANGER
ROOM'S
HOLOGRAPHIC
TECHNOLOGY
CAN BRING
ANY REALITY
IMAGINABLE
TO LIFE--



--EVEN THE WOLVERINE.

'BOUT TIME YOU SHOWED, ELF.

Y'ALMOST MISSED THE FUN!

LOGAN RISKED EVERYTHING TO HELP BRING ME BACK FROM THE AFTERLIFE, AS IF HE KNEW OUR STORY WASN'T COMPLETE.

I THOUGHT WE'D HAVE MORE TIME TOGETHER.

DID HE KNOW HIS HAD ALL BUT RUN OUT?

DID HE EVEN CARE?

THE DANGER ROOM IS CULLING THESE SCENES FROM ITS RECORD OF MY MEMORIES.

THIS IS LOGAN AS I BEST REMEMBER HIM, LITERALLY A PRIMAL FORCE FOR LIFE.

YET, LOOKING AT HIM NOW, HEARING HIS VOICE, I WONDER IF I SHOULD HAVE LEFT WELL ENOUGH ALONE.



THE REASON PROFESSOR XAVIER
GATHERED US TOGETHER WAS TO
RESCUE THE ORIGINAL TEAM OF X-MEN...

...IMPRISONED BY THE SENTIENT
PACIFIC ISLAND OF KRAKOA.

THE CREATURE CONSIDERED
SUPER-POWERED MUTANTS ITS
ULTIMATE SOURCE OF FOOD.

THIS IS NO
PLACE FOR A
LADY, RED.

MY
CLAWS'LL CUT
YOU LOOSE.

IT HAD ALREADY
DEFEATED ONE
TEAM OF X-MEN.

IT THOUGHT
TO DO THE
SAME TO US.



ITS ARROGANCE
PROVED COSTLY.



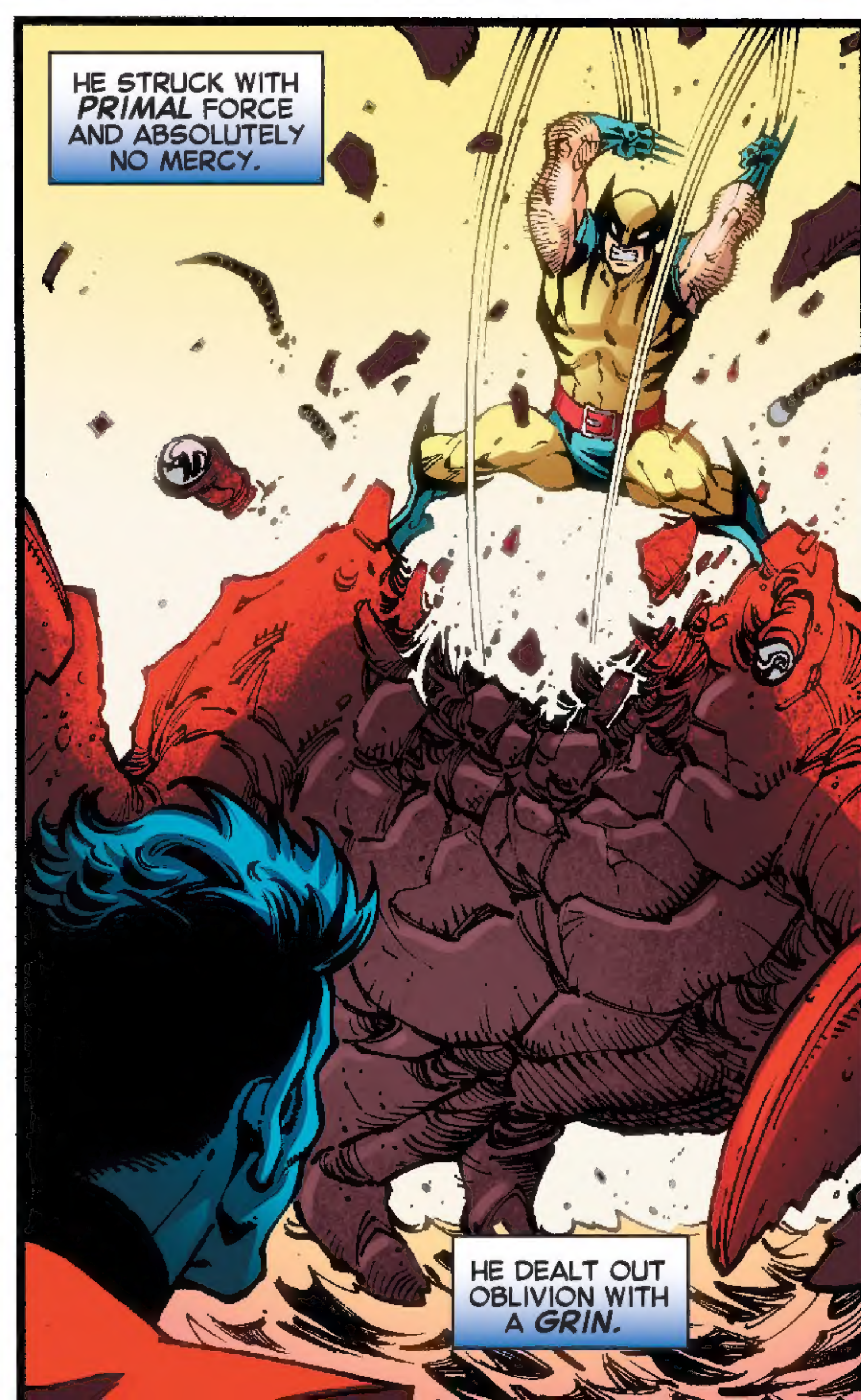
CYCLOPS QUICKLY
REALIZED THAT WE
MAY BE ON OUR FIRST
MISSION AS A TEAM...



...BUT WE ALL KNEW
FULL WELL HOW TO
USE OUR POWERS.



THE FIERCEST
AMONG US
PROVED TO
BE THE OLDEST.



HE STRUCK WITH
PRIMAL FORCE
AND ABSOLUTELY
NO MERCY.

HE DEALT OUT
OBLIVION WITH
A GRIN.



RISK MEANT
NOTHING, AND
DANGER EVEN
LESS. HE'D
ALREADY LIVED
A SCORE OF
LIFETIMES.

AS FAR AS THE
WOLVERINE WAS
CONCERNED, HE
WAS GOING TO
LIVE FOREVER.

IN **JEAN GREY**, LOGAN FOUND THE WOMAN OF HIS DREAMS.

HER HEART WAS ALREADY PLEDGED TO **SCOTT SUMMERS** BUT LOGAN DIDN'T CARE.

HE WAS A CREATURE OF **INSTINCT** AND THOSE INSTINCTS HAD NEVER PLAYED HIM FALSE.

BUT THEN, SHE BECAME **PHOENIX**.

SHE BONDED WITH A PRIMAL FORCE OF EXISTENCE--

--THE GIVER AND TAKER OF LIFE, ON A COSMIC SCALE.

SHE WAS HUNGRY AND CONSUMED A STAR.

KILLING SIX BILLION D'BARI ON THAT STAR'S INHABITED PLANET DID NOTHING TO SATIATE THE PHOENIX.

WE FOUGHT TO SAVE HER. AND FIND A WAY TO SET THINGS RIGHT.

BUT IN THE END, JEAN KNEW HER STORY COULD HAVE BUT ONE ENDING.

FACING THE **ULTIMATE** TEMPTATION, SHE SAID 'NO!'

JEAN WAS THE **BEST** OF US.

THE LOSS WAS ALMOST MORE THAN LOGAN COULD BEAR.

YOU'VE DRUNK ENOUGH, MY FRIEND.

NOT HARDLY--

--WHEN MY **FLAMIN' HEALING FACTOR** KEEPS MAKIN' ME SOBER.

LOGAN, PLEASE LET ME HELP!

MIND YOUR OWN DAMN BUSINESS, WAGNER--

--AN' LEMME **GRIEVE** IN PEACE!

SLAM!

HE WAS A
HARDER MAN
AFTER THAT...

...DETERMINED TO MAKE SURE
NO MORE OF HIS TEAMMATES
WOULD DIE ON HIS WATCH.

OUR NEWEST MEMBER,
YOUNG KITTY PRYDE,
BECAME THE FOCUS
OF HIS EFFORTS.

IT WAS DURING OUR
BATTLE WITH THE
MARAUDERS THAT HE
ALMOST LOST US BOTH.



I WAS
CAUGHT BY
SURPRISE BY
RIPTIDE.

NIGHTCRAWLER!

'PORT
OUTTA THERE--
NOW!

LOGAN'S WARNING
CAME TOO LATE.

BEFORE I COULD TELEPORT
TO SAFETY, RIPTIDE PEPPERED
ME WITH SCORES OF RAZOR-
EDGED PROJECTILES.

KURT!

OH,
STORM--!
HE'S CUT ALL
OVER--THERE'S
SO MUCH
BLOOD--!

I FEEL A
PULSE. WE
STILL HAVE A
CHANCE TO
SAVE HIM!

FIND ME A
CLOTH--SOMETHING,
ANYTHING--TO USE
AS TEMPORARY
BANDAGES!

I WAS BUT ONE OF
MANY CASUALTIES,
AMONG X-MEN AND
MORLOCKS BOTH.

AMONG THEM WAS KITTY,
WOUNDED PROTECTING
ROGUE FROM ANOTHER
MARAUDER, HARPOON.

I FELL INTO A COMA,
WHILE KITTY LOST CONTROL
OF HER PHASING POWER,
FADING ALMOST TO THE
POINT OF EXTINCTION.

WHEN I AWOKE IN **MOIRA MACTAGGART'S** RESEARCH FACILITY ON **MUIR ISLAND**, OFF THE NORTHERN COAST OF **SCOTLAND**...

...IT WAS TO LEARN THAT THE **X-MEN** HAD ALL BEEN LOST...

...SAVING HUMANITY FROM AN ANCIENT, MALEVOLENT FORCE, THE **TRICKSTER**.

IN A HEART-STROKE, OUR WORLD HAD CHANGED.

OUR FRIENDS WERE GONE.

CHARLES XAVIER'S SCHOOL-- AND THE TEAM OF **NEW MUTANTS**-- WERE UNDER THE CARE AND TUTELAGE OF HIS BEST FRIEND, OUR TEAM'S GREATEST ADVERSARY, **MAGNETO**.

KITTY AND I HAD LOST EVERYTHING.

SO WE DID WHAT X-MEN ALWAYS SEEM TO DO IN SUCH TIMES...

...WE STARTED AGAIN.

NEW LAND, NEW BEGINNING, NEW TEAM--

--EXCALIBUR!

AFTER DAVIS

OF COURSE, THE X-MEN
WERE **NOT** DEAD.

AND IN GOOD TIME,
BEST FRIENDS WERE
REUNITED.

TOGETHER, LOGAN
AND I TRAVELED THE
WORLD...



...AND FOUGHT BESIDE OUR
TEAM AGAINST **BASTION**.

THAT WAS WHERE
MY **LUCK** RAN OUT.



PROTECTING THE
CHILD CALLED
"**HOPE**," I WAS
CRITICALLY WOUNDED
BY **BASTION**.

I MANAGED TO
TELEPORT **HOPE**
TO **SAFETY**...

...BUT MY WOUND
WAS **MORTAL**.



I THOUGHT
MY STORY
WAS **DONE**.

I'M AN **X-MAN**,
I SHOULD HAVE
KNOWN **BETTER**.

I FOUND MYSELF
IN **HEAVEN**.

ALL I BELIEVED--
THE BEST OF MY
FAITH--WAS PROVED
TO BE **REAL**.

BUT TRY AS
I MIGHT, I
FOUND I COULD
NOT **ACCEPT**
THAT **REALITY**.



I WASN'T SURPRISED
WHEN THE **X-MEN**
FOLLOWED ME.

WHEN THE MOMENT
CAME FOR ME TO
CHOOSE, I TURNED MY
BACK ON **HEAVEN**...

...AND RETURNED
WITH MY FRIENDS
TO OUR **WORLD**,
AND TO **LIFE**.

NOT LONG AFTERWARDS, LOGAN AND I WENT FOR A WALK THROUGH **SALEM CENTER**, VISITING OUR CLASSIC HAUNTS FOR OLD TIME'S SAKE.

I WASN'T YET **COMFORTABLE** IN MY BODY--EMOTIONALLY OR PHYSICALLY--



--SO I USED MY **IMAGE INDUCER** TO PRESENT A "**NORMAL**" FACE TO THE WORLD.

LOGAN, OF COURSE, HAD **OTHER IDEAS.**

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!



GIMME A BREAK, ELF--WE BEEN DOIN' THIS, **WITHOUT** THAT TOY, FOR YEARS!

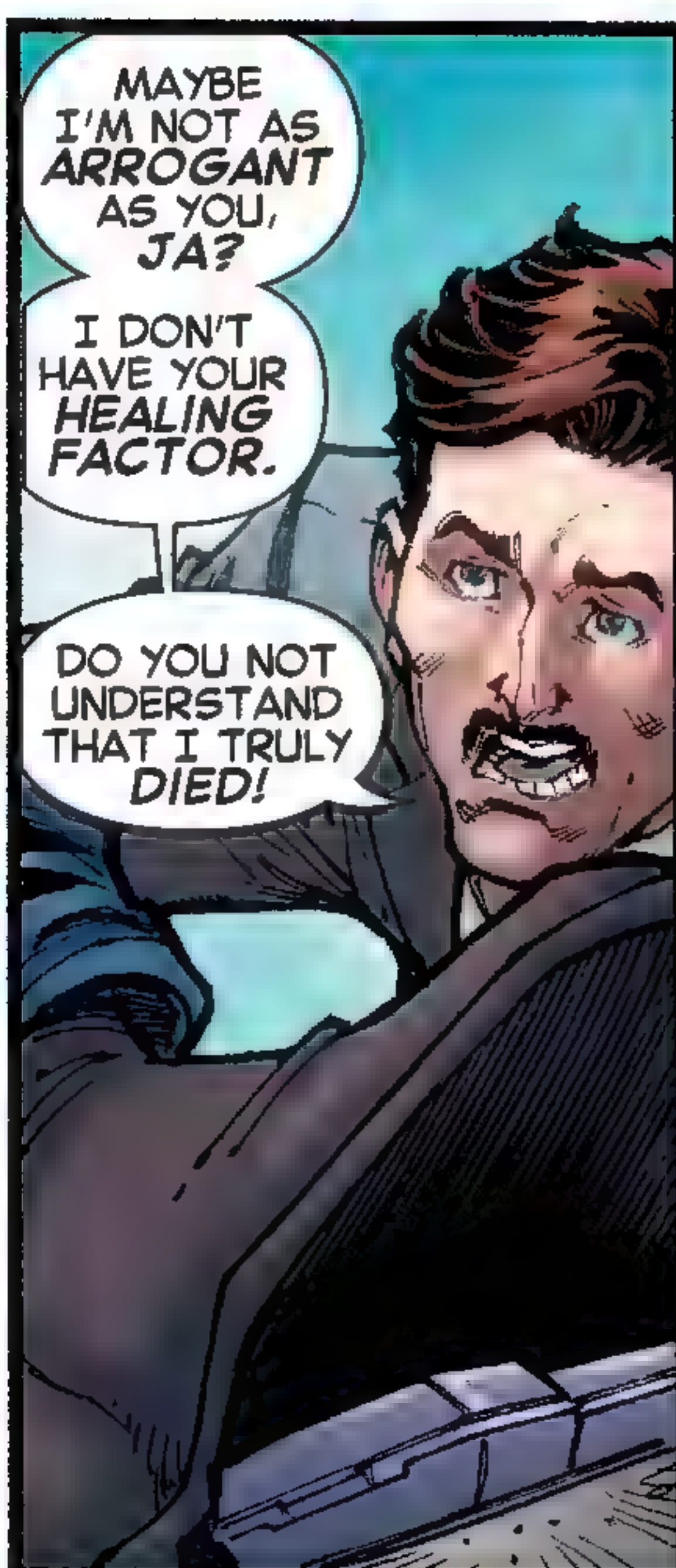
WHY THE COLD FEET NOW?



MAYBE I'M NOT AS **ARROGANT** AS YOU, JA?

I DON'T HAVE YOUR **HEALING FACTOR.**

DO YOU NOT UNDERSTAND THAT I **TRULY DIED!**



GET OVER IT.

BECAUSE NOW, MY FRIEND, YOU'RE **ALIVE.**



EMBRACE THE **MAN** YOU ARE.

AND THE **WORLD** YOU LIVE IN.



YOU'VE MADE THIS TOWN YOUR **HOME.**

AND ITS PEOPLE, YOUR **FRIENDS.**

SHOW AS MUCH FAITH IN THEM AS YOU DO IN YOUR **GOD.**

JUST LIKE HIM, I BET THEY'LL **SURPRISE** YOU.

AND HE WAS **RIGHT.**







ONLY ONE
ELEMENT IS
MISSING.

THE *CENTERPIECE*
OF THIS CELEBRATION.



THE COMPUTER
HAS DONE A
WONDERFUL JOB...

...BRINGING
HIS FRIENDS
TO LIFE.



WHY WON'T IT
DO THE SAME
FOR HIM?



WHY CAN'T WE
CELEBRATE
HIS LIFE?

DO HIM THE
HONOR HE
HAS SO RICHLY
EARNED?



THERE--
AT THE
DOORWAY!



OPEN
THE DOOR,
LOGAN--

--SO
YOUR PARTY
CAN TRULY
BEGIN!



BUT...



THIS ISN'T
WHAT YOU
WOULD HAVE
WANTED,
IS IT?



DAMN
YOU!



I SHOULD HAVE
KNOWN BETTER.

LOGAN ISN'T SOMEONE
TO BE REMEMBERED IN
THIS WEB OF *FANTASY*.

FOR HIM, FRIENDS SIT
AROUND A MIDNIGHT
FIRE ON THE HILLTOP
OVERLOOKING
BREAKSTONE LAKE.

YOU TOAST THE MAN
AND TELL STORIES ABOUT
HIM THAT MAKE YOU LAUGH,
YOU DO *HONOR* TO HIS
LIFE BY VOWING TO MAKE
YOURS *BETTER*!



AND WITH THE
DAWN, YOU START
YOUR LIFE *ANEW*.

BECAUSE ABOVE ALL
MY FRIEND LOGAN WAS
A MAN WHOSE EXISTENCE
WAS GROUNDED IN THE
REAL WORLD.

NOT THIS FIELD
OF *DREAMS*.

THE WOLVERINE
TOUCHED SO
MANY SOULS.

HE MADE MISTAKES
AND TRIED HIS BEST
TO SET THEM RIGHT.

HE FOUGHT FOR HIS
FRIENDS AND TRIED HIS
BEST TO MAKE THEIR
WORLD A BETTER PLACE.

HE NEVER GAVE
UP, AND NEVER
BACKED DOWN.



NACH
AFTER
BYRNE
TRIMPE
ROMITA JR.
SILVESTRI
McGUINNESS

HE WOULD GO
TO THE WALL
FOR THOSE HE
CARED ABOUT.

HE WOULD EVEN
FORGIVE YOU IF
YOU COULDN'T
MATCH THOSE
STANDARDS.

ALL HE
DEMANDED, IN
THE END, WAS
THAT YOU TRY.

IF YOU
BROUGHT ME
BACK TO LIFE
FOR NO OTHER
REASON,
LORD...

...I PRAY
IT IS TO PROVE
MYSELF EQUAL
TO THAT
CHALLENGE.

LOGAN
DESERVES
NO LESS. HE
WAS MY
FRIEND.





EMPIRE